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United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Program Aid No. 1293

# Resource Planning for America

—Looking at 1985 with the  
Resources Planning Act

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## **Introducing RPA**

For over 75 years the Forest Service has been following the advice of its first Chief, Gifford Pinchot, who believed we must manage our Nation's resources to bring about the "greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time." In an increasingly complex and challenging world, this philosophy has become not only more difficult to pursue, but also the subject of widespread concern. This concern led to the passage of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) in 1974. The RPA, as amended by the National Forest Management Act of 1976, provides a framework for comprehensive, long-range, and continuous planning for our Nation's natural resources.

RPA requires that companion documents, a renewable resources Assessment and a Forest Service Program, be prepared every 10 and 5 years, respectively. These documents look 50 years ahead to plan and prepare for our natural resource future based on today's knowledge.

The first Assessment and Program documents were completed in 1975; the second ones in 1980. The groundwork for a 1984 Assessment Supplement and 1985 Program is now being laid. The Assessment Supplement will consider new and improved information available since the 1979 Assessment was published and will help to set the goals for the 1985 Program.

The RPA emphasizes opportunities for the public to help shape the decisions that will emerge in final form in the 1985 RPA Program, just as public participation helped to shape the 1975 and 1980 programs. Let us look at the updating process more closely.

### **The 1984 Assessment Supplement**

The Resources Planning Act is the driving force behind the most comprehensive effort ever undertaken to tally the entire country's resources derived from forests and rangelands and associated waters. RPA requires inventories and assessments of the wood, water, wildlife and fish, forage, and outdoor recreation available on private and public lands. (Minerals, although nonrenewable, are included because of their vital importance to the Nation.) The 1979 Assessment is a storehouse of technical knowledge that describes the Nation's future levels of supply and demand for these renewable resources. Also, it evaluates opportunities to manage and improve yields of tangible and intangible goods and services derived from the resources. It uses certain basic assumptions and projections to determine our future demands and our ability to meet them. For example, it assumes that, by 2030:

- The population of America will rise to 300 million from the 220 million tallied in 1977.
- The gross national product (GNP) will be 3.7 times that of 1977—\$5,160 billion.

- Disposable personal income (what's left after taxes) will grow from about \$960 billion in 1977 to \$3,610 billion.

But long-term assumptions and projections can go awry. Census figures change quickly along with GNP and economic activities, and there is a need to evaluate these and other changes that have occurred since the 1979 Assessment was published. The 1984 Assessment Supplement, accordingly, will incorporate the most pertinent changes, re-examine the assumptions of the 1979 Assessment, include new resource information, and apply new analytical techniques to improve estimates of future resource conditions. This updated evaluation of the Nation's renewable and nonrenewable resources, along with a detailed look at the implications of the resource situation, will help the Forest Service form the 1985 RPA Program.

## **The 1985 RPA Program**

The 1985 RPA Program will be the third one to present a comprehensive, long-range, and continuous plan for forest and range management activities on the 190-million-acre National Forest System (NFS). It will also detail forest and range research activities and cooperative forestry assistance programs for the Forest Service—all to be built on the findings presented in the 1979 Assessment and the 1984 Assessment Supplement.

The 1985 Program will spell out our natural resource goals and their implications for each of the resources that are obtained through management of National Forest System lands, research to be conducted by the Forest Service, and the assistance planned for State and private forest landowners. It will also detail the management objectives and strategies designed to achieve the goals. By doing so, the Program will provide Congress with a practical basis to relate annual budgets to long-term resource needs.

Other publications—*Alternative Goals—1985 RPA Program* (to be released in fall 1981) and a review draft copy of the 1985 RPA Program (to be released in late fall 1983)—will explain in detail how the 1985 RPA Program will be structured. Briefly, the Program will evolve from strengthened ties to the findings in the 1979 Assessment, the resource management programs described in the current 1980 RPA Program, and the opportunities presented in the 1984 Assessment Supplement.

Equally important will be the use of improved data stemming from an integrated three-level planning process: (1) the national plans exemplified by the data included in the Assessment; (2) regional plans of the Forest Service; and (3) at grassroots level, Forest Land and Resource Management Plans for the National Forests, State Forest Resource Plans developed by States for State and private lands, and the research plans of the Forest Service.

One significant difference in the 1985 Program will be the emphasis on goals rather than on policy issues as in the 1980 Program. This new approach stems from a critique of the 1980 process. (As explained on next page, the public will participate in the 1985 Program development by helping



to select a single national goal for each of 10 opportunity areas rather than by selecting alternative goals as was done in 1980.)

The policy issues referred to above are public concerns that will be granted special consideration throughout the 1985 planning process. An example of such an issue, and one that was presented in the 1980 RPA Program, is the role of timber production from private nonindustrial lands in meeting the Nation's timber requirements.

## **Public Participation**

Public involvement, of course, will continue to be a cornerstone of RPA. There will be two formal public review periods in the 1985 RPA update.

**(1) Participation will be invited during a review of alternative goals that will lead to selection of a single national goal for each of 10 opportunity areas. Participation will be sought through a publication, *Alternative Goals—1985 RPA Program*, scheduled for release in the fall of 1981.** Public comments will help select the goals around which the 1985 Program alternatives will be developed.

**(2) Participation will again be invited when the draft Program and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are released in late fall 1983.** These separate documents will describe detailed alternatives for moving toward our final goals. A preferred program will be identified at this point; public comments will help us select a final recommended program to meet the 1985 deadline of the Resources Planning Act.

Public comments received during Regional and National Forest planning processes will also be used.

## **Conclusion**

After satisfying all pertinent laws and regulations and after reviews by Federal agencies and departments; representatives of States, universities, and organizations; and individual citizens interested in the natural resource needs of the Nation, the Forest Service will assemble the final recommended program.

The President will then transmit the recommended program to Congress along with a Presidential Statement of Policy describing how the program will be put in effect through yearly budget requests.

## **Postscript**

*Natural Resource Horizons* is a compact, highly readable publication that enlarges on the 1980 RPA planning process. It abridges the 1979 RPA Assessment and the 1980 RPA Program documents and presents the 1980 RPA Recommended Program in a situation-and-response format. A copy can be obtained by contacting any Forest Service office throughout the Nation.

October 1981